

CHCS



'BIGGEST' WINNER' 2008

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." - Philippians 4:13

Engaging. It's a word that's become a part of my life these days. Our oldest daughter, Lindsey, is engaged to be married -- and so is my mother! As a matter of fact, Mom is getting married this Friday!

But that's not the kind of engaging I want you to think about. I'm talking about the muscle groups that you engage when you are working out. There are right ways and wrong ways to perform each exercise. The right way will work specific muscles and make you stronger. The wrong way will be less efficient, and could even be harmful.

For example:

- If you are doing a curl with a dumbbell, be sure to keep your wrist in a "neutral" position (wrist and hand remaining in line with your lower arm). **Don't** let your wrist "cock" backward, which places a lot of strain on the forearm and connective tissue.
- When doing crunches on a stability ball (the stability ball is probably my favorite workout "tool", by the way), don't release your abs as you return to the start position -- keep them engaged, or contracted. If you release, or relax these muscles as you return to the start position, you may place unnecessary stress on surrounding ligaments and discs.

You need to exercise "on purpose" -- that is, concentrate on doing the moves properly. If you learn to do them right from the beginning, you will often know when you're doing something wrong. Listen to your body, and adjust accordingly.

You can go to the Y or other fitness center with your questions as well. There are people who are there to answer questions about the correct way to exercise.

And, finally, did you know you can engage more than one muscle group in a single exercise? That's what I like about the stability ball. Balancing on the ball while doing various exercises causes you to engage muscles you wouldn't necessarily use for that particular move. Try getting the most for your workout time by engaging more than one muscle group at a time!

Goin' to the chapel (seriously, Mom is getting married at The Chapel in Green!),

Pat

*Again, I recommend the book **Do It Right** for great advice on how to do --and NOT do -- specific exercises: www.shape.com/index (as mentioned in our first e-newsletter).*

Delicious Pita Chips

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Cut five pita pockets into 8 wedges each. Arrange wedges on a large baking sheet that has been sprayed with no-stick spray. Drizzle 2 to 3 tablespoons of olive oil evenly over pitas. Toss lightly and spread wedges out evenly. Sprinkle with one teaspoon oregano (more to taste), salt, and fresh-ground black pepper (or red if you like a spicier chip).

Bake 8 to 12 minutes, or until golden in color. Serve warm pitas along with fresh salsa (Giant Eagle makes a great fresh salsa found in their deli department called Mexican style with extra cilantro; Pancho's Restaurant's salsa is also excellent).

Pita bread is fat free and the olive oil is, of course, the best. The sky is the limit to what spices you sprinkle on these wedges. Rosemary and thyme or garlic and onion powder would be nice variations. Or how about cumin or chili powder and coriander for an Indian twist along with a spritz of fresh lime juice? Move over potato chips, homemade is best!

Tip: Put the chips in a ziploc bag with your salt and desired spices and shake to evenly coat them.

One-Minute Workout Boosters

Here are a few moves that may help in your fitness quest. Every little bit helps!

» *Slow Down* When doing ab moves, take four counts to lift and two to lower. Research has shown that abdominal muscle activity is significantly greater when lifting than when lowering.

» *Pace, Don't Sit* Walking back and forth when you're doing something like talking on the phone will burn more than 1-1/2 times as many calories as sitting.

» *Powered Up Stair-Climbing* Instead of walking leisurely up a flight of stairs, gradually increase your speed and the number of stairs you take in one minute. Take two steps at once -- if you're able to do it safely -- and you'll target your glutes even more.

» *More Stair Moves* For every three steps you take, stop and do five calf raises (stand on the balls of your feet on the edge of a step and then lower heels to just below step height).

Information found in booklet "Fast Workouts" from the publishers of Fitness magazine.